

THREE COUNT

**Professional Wrestling Newsletter
by Alex Marvez**

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FLORIDA INVESTIGATES WRESTLING REGULATION; STEROID TESTING POSSIBLE

Growing allegations of widespread steroid use among professional wrestlers, including World Wrestling Federation champion Hulk Hogan, have Florida officials investigating possible regulatory measures toward the masters of the mat.

Florida's Committee on Regulated Industries will discuss a proposal concerning pro wrestling Nov. 5 at a meeting in Tallahassee. Janet Clark, a legislative analyst who researched the proposal, said a mandatory random drug test for anabolic steroids and street drugs may be one of the recommendations.

"It's an important issue to raise," said Committee chairman Norman Ostarau. "I'm not looking at regulating an industry we don't need to, but we need to at least identify if there is a problem. I think there is."

Some former pro wrestlers and those involved in the sport claim as many as 90 percent of today's grapplers use anabolic steroids for increased size and muscularity. Twenty-one states currently have commissions that regulate pro wrestling, but none test for anabolic steroids. Most of those commissions are tied in with the state's boxing commission, with wrestling taxes usually going to finance boxing. The only steroid-related enforcement any athletic commission has executed, was in New Jersey. Hawk, of the Legion of Doom, was banned from appearing in a May 1990 WCW card at the Meadowlands because of an abnormally high heart rate.

Enhancing claims of the drug's use were revelations that 37 wrestlers and the WWF headquarters in Stamford, Conn. received packages from Dr. George T. Zahorian, a Pennsylvania osteopath convicted last June on eight counts of illegal steroid distribution. Federal Express receipts subpoenaed by the federal government revealed 33 wrestlers who have appeared in the WWF received packages from Zahorian between 1986 and 1990. This includes some of WWF's top stars -- Hogan (Terry Bollea), The Ultimate Warrior (Jim Hellwig), Randy Savage (Randy Poffo) and Jake Roberts (Aurelian Smith). A complete list of wrestlers receiving packages from Zahorian is provided on Page 5.

Hogan's involvement

Hogan and wife Linda Bollea received five packages totaling 11 pounds. Assistant U.S. attorney Theodore Smith said the content of the packages to Hogan and the other wrestlers was unknown. However, a chart presented during Zahorian's trial revealing a discrepancy between the quantity of drugs Zahorian purchased and the amount provided to patients. Less than six percent of 49,700 anabolic steroid tablets and less than 12 percent of 9,800 CCs of injectable steroids were prescribed to Zahorian's patients. Similarly, for 24,200 tablets of sidominophines and sedatives, patients received less than one percent of that total. A chart providing the complete breakdown is provided on Page 5.

Hogan, whose subpoena to testify at the Zahorian trial was quashed by a federal judge, would not return phone calls. Hogan has previously claimed using steroids three times in 1983 to cure an arm injury, and has not used them since.

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However, there are gaping holes in Hogan's stories. In an appearance on *The Arsenio Hall Show* in July, Hogan claimed he used anabolic steroids to cure an arm injury when he became world champion in 1983. Cortical steroids, not anabolic steroids, are used to heal torn or injured muscles. Also, Hogan became champion in January of 1984. Both those statements were corrected on later interviews with Hogan hyping his new movie, *Suburban Commando*. In recent weeks, Hogan also has claimed to have invented entrance music for wrestlers (lie), been responsible for the ban of blood in wrestling (lie) and states he is the greatest American ever (a bit suspect, eh?).

The WWF received 31 packages totaling 86 pounds. Shipments were addressed to WWF owner Vince McMahon, Emily Feinberg (McMahon's secretary), and announcers Lord Alfred Hayes and Gene Okerlund. Packages were also sent to McMahon in Atlanta in 1988 when he and Hogan were on-location filming The Hulkster's first movie, *No Holds Barred*. McMahon never signed for any packages, and Hayes received the brunt of the orders sent to WWF offices.

Five current or former WWF wrestlers (Roddy Piper, Rick Martel, "Superstar" Billy Graham, Danny Spivey and Brian Blair) testified they purchased anabolic steroids between 1988 and 1990 from Zahorian, the ringside physician for WWF matches in the 1970s and '80s in Allentown, Penn. The wrestlers were not charged, because steroid use was not a federal crime until February 1991. In his testimony, Zahorian said he sold steroids to Hogan from 1984-89, and to between 15 to 20 wrestlers routinely at the WWF's live cards in Pennsylvania.

WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta refused comment on what was inside the packages Zahorian sent to the WWF. Zahorian, who is awaiting sentencing, would not return phone calls.

Zenk arrested

Tom "Z-Man" Zenk, a mid-card wrestler for Ted Turner's World Championship Wrestling, was arrested in September outside of Atlanta on six felony counts of possession of a controlled substance, one charge of possession of a dangerous substance and one charge of possession of marijuana less than one ounce.

Clayton County police records state seven different types of prepackaged, labeled anabolic steroids were in Zenk's possession at the time of his arrest. Zenk was originally going to be booked on simple battery when his ex-fiance reported Zenk had repeatedly struck her. A search of Zenk's hotel room revealed quantities of the steroids Methylandroiol, Oxymethanol, Testosterone, Fluoxymesterone, Winstrol-V and Primoblen (all felonies). He was also caught with Chorionic Gonadotropin, which is considered a misdemeanor.

The battery charge against Zenk has been dropped, but Zenk may be facing felony charges of intent to distribute once the exact quantities of each substance are determined by a police lab. WCW has taken no disciplinary action against Zenk, who has a \$156,000 annual contract.

Merchandising and children

Hogan, the most popular performer in the history of wrestling, has starred in two motion pictures and is a mainstream figure in commercial endorsements. He is the leading figure of the wrestling merchandising market aimed at children, which is worth almost \$2 billion annually between the WWF (\$1.7 billion) and WCW (\$200 million) according to *The Licensing Letter* newsletter which compiles sales figures.

"The whole kids industry is based on toys of guys who are using steroids," said Dave Meltzer, editor of *The Wrestling Observer Newsletter*. "There is a danger of kids growing up wanting that type of look. When you're 15 years old and you realize you can't look like your heroes naturally, what are you going to do?"

Ostarau said the influence wrestling has on children is one reason regulation is being discussed. More than 40 cards are held annually in Florida by both the WWF and WCW, and hundreds more by smaller independent promoters. In South Florida, more than 15 hours of wrestling telecasts are

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available weekly between network and cable television.

"I was floored when told annual sales of one unit of WWF merchandise is more than that of the NFL and NBA combined," said Ostarau, a Plantation-based attorney. The youth market the WWF attracts is incredible. It's a substantially influential market, and steroid use should not be what's purveyed to the youth of this country."

Gilbert's admission: drug-testing policies

Eddie Gilbert, who wrestled in WCW from 1988-90, said he used anabolic steroids from 1986-87 when wrestling in the Oklahoma-based Universal Wrestling Federation.

"I felt it would enhance my career," said Gilbert, who is currently 5-9, 210 pounds, weighs approximately 15 pounds less than during his period of steroid use and is substantially less muscular.

"That's the way everybody was going, and they were the ones the promoters were using," Gilbert said. "You saw guys who couldn't even lace their boots getting put in main events."

"To be honest, that was the time I was on top. I saw myself used in a different way."

Gilbert received 21 packages from Zahorian, but said they were pain killers for a broken neck sustained in a 1983 car accident.

Now a 13-year pro who is a top star for the Global Wrestling Federation in Dallas, Gilbert said he stopped using steroids because of difficulty fathering a child with ex-wife Missy Hyatt. (See page 6 for the first of a two-part interview with Gilbert.)

Steve Davis, a San Jose-based physician and steroid expert, said reduced sperm count is one of the effects of steroid use. Meltzer, who plans to testify at the Committee meeting, said it is common for some wrestlers to temporarily stop using anabolic steroids when trying to start a family.

Both the WWF and WCW have in-house drug testing policies for "hard" drugs, like cocaine. WCW also tests for sedatives, which manager Teddy Long reportedly failed earlier this year. But there have been no penalties given to several wrestlers from both groups arrested on drug charges within the past year.

WCW star "Flyin'" Brian Pillman was arrested September 18 (one day prior to Zenk's arrest) in Clayton County on forgery charges stemming from an attempt to illegally fill a prescription. The charges against Pillman were dropped because of lack of evidence.

WCW grappler Thomas Rich (Tom Richardson) was arrested July 31 on possession of marijuana less than one ounce in LaGrange, Ga. Rich is awaiting a hearing in Troop County state court.

WCW legal counsel Kip Frey said the promotion would wait until the wrestlers' legal proceedings had concluded before issuing disciplinary action.

WWF manager Bobby Heenan was arrested last January in Tampa on charges of marijuana possession, and was neither fined nor suspended by his employer. Heenan entered a pretrial intervention program four months later, with charges pending to be dropped upon its completion next October.

McMahon, who admitted using anabolic steroids briefly in 1987, announced in July that the WWF would begin testing for anabolic steroids. The program has yet to be enacted, and many remain skeptical it will.

"I couldn't believe the WWF said it was going to test," Gilbert said. "Everybody there is on it. If you watch their TV shows, doesn't it look like everybody is taking something? The wrestlers look inhuman."

The World Bodybuilding Federation, WWF's sister company, announced it had implemented a steroid testing procedure three times within the past year, dating back as early as January 1991. The test has yet to be conducted.

Planamenta said the WWF's testing will be implemented soon, with the delay only because the promotion is still finalizing its testing procedure.

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"People honestly shouldn't believe it until they see it," Planamenta said. "All I can say is, we're going to do it. We're serious about this topic."

Frey said the Turner organization was investigating possible testing, but did not set a time table.

"WCW knows if they tested, it would be half their guys or more (testing positive)," Gilbert said. "I really believe people in the head office that set WCW company policy don't care who does it as long as they make a buck."

Gilbert, who estimates 75 percent of today's wrestlers use anabolic steroids, said it is futile convincing wrestlers to stop using the drug.

"You can't tell them anything," Gilbert said. "They won't listen. That's their way of life. They take the pills, work-out and don't care. They're totally brainwashed by the fact this is what pushes them to the top. And as long as we have the heads of offices thinking that's what people want to see, they're going to keep doing it."

Other regulatory measures

Other measures being considered by the Committee include:

- * Registration of all participants in a wrestling card (wrestlers, managers, referees and promoters) with the state athletic commission. Clark said the registration fee would be minimal, and could create a list of performers eligible for drug testing.

- * A mandatory performance bond given by the promoter before an event to insure the host building is paid. Herb Abrams' Universal Wrestling Federation has still not paid an outstanding debt of more than \$6,800 to the Manatee County Civic Center for use of the facility for the group's June 8 Beach Brawl pay-per-view show. The cost of the bond would also be minimal, with the promoter usually having to deposit only five percent of the bond's worth (i.e. \$250 on a \$5,000 bond).

- * Minimal life, health and accident insurance required for each wrestler prior to their match. Cost would be minimal, and most likely regulated through the state.

- * Penalties against promoters who advertise wrestlers who don't appear on a live show. Examples of this are WCW knowingly billing Scott Steiner to wrestle early in November when he won't be ready, the WWF not announcing Savage was to substitute for Sid Justice in matches against Roberts until the bout was about to begin, and the UWF billing more than 10 wrestlers who didn't appear at an Oct. 1 show in Fort Lauderdale.

- * A tax on a percentage of revenue from national wrestling pay-per-view events purchased in Florida. This could be where the exaggerated pay-per-view figures given by the WWF come back to haunt them. Should this idea become a proposal, a survey of Florida cable operators is expected to be performed after every national pay-per-view show. The percentage of buys would be taxed. During 1990, the WWF averaged a buy rate of 3.1 and WCW 2.1, according to a survey of a little less than 50 percent of the state's cable operators. This proposal could generate more than \$200,000 annually for the commission, should it pass.

More will be written about this subject in upcoming weeks. I will attend the Nov. 5 meeting in Tallahassee. Speakers lined up by Clark are: Meltzer, steroid experts from the medical field and Mary Lou Gantner, the mother of the late Ed Gantner. Mrs. Gantner said her son, a former wrestling star in Florida from 1985 to 1987, experienced severe health problems because of steroid abuse, and continued to use the drug even after having a kidney removed because of steroid-related problems. There has been talk of Billy Graham (who plans to file a lawsuit against the WWF Oct. 30) and David Sammartino also testifying, but it appears doubtful either will come. Both wrestling organizations are against regulation, with WCW executive vice president Jim Herd threatening to pull out, and Planamenta claiming the WWF is a self-contained organization. My story should have appeared in The Miami Herald by 10/27, and I expect media repercussions soon after.

**Breakdown of wrestlers receiving
Federal Express packages from George Zahorian**

* Jake Roberts (Aurelian Smith)
 * Adrian Adonis (Keith Franke)
 * Jerry Allen
 * Danny Spivey
 * Bam Bam Bigalow
 * Brian Blair
 * Rich Martel
 * Moondog Spot (Larry Booker)
 * Hulk Hogan
 * Ken Patera
 * Moondog Rex (Randy Colley)
 * Dan Bower
 * Rudy Diamond
 * Terry Gibbs
 * Don Muroco
 * Tom Magee
 Mike Rotunda
 * Roddy Piper
 * David Schultz
 * Greg Valentine

Eddie Gilbert
 * George Steele (Jim Myers)
 * Jim Powers
 * Mr. Perfect (Curt Hennig)
 * The Ultimate Warrior (Jim Hellwig)
 * Hercules (Ray Hernandez)
 * Junk Yard Dog
 * Virgil (Michael Jones)
 Damien Kane
 * Olympia Hartauer
 * Boris Zhukov
 * Paul Orndorff
 * Bob Orton Jr.
 * Randy Savage
 * Rick Rude
 Masa Saito
 Buddy Rose
 Masa Saito
 * Big Boss Man (Ray Traylor)

* -- Indicates usage while in the World Wrestling Federation

**Comparison of drugs purchased by George Zahorian
and amount provided to patients
(For period of Sept. 1988-March 1990)**

Steroids

<u>Drug</u>	<u>Purchased</u>	<u>Provided to patients</u>	<u>% provided to patients</u>
Anovar	8,500 tablets	330	4 %
Methytestosterone	28,000 tablets	230	less than 1 %
Testosterone (*)	4,700 CCs	504	11 %
Anadrol/Winstrol	13,200 tablets	140	less than 1 %
Testost. Cipiate	7,000 tablets	20	less than 1 %

Sidominophines and sedatives

Tylenol 4	10,200 tablets	58	less than 1 %
Tylenol 3	7,000 tablets	30	less than 1 %
Valium	7,000 tablets	20	less than 1 %

(*) -- A combination of deca testosterone and acquious testosterone.

SPOTLIGHT ON: EDDIE GILBERT

This is part one of a two-part interview with Eddie Gilbert, the current Global Wrestling Federation television champion and one of the most innovative thinkers in wrestling. In this portion, Gilbert discusses anabolic steroids, his use of the drug and what it has done to pro wrestling. Next issue will feature Gilbert's comments about the suspension of Paul E. Dangerously and the United States Wrestling Alliance.

AM: What can you tell me about steroids in pro wrestling?

EG: They have made what started out as not such a big deal during 1981-82 into such a thing that everybody is in competition with each other about the way they look. Unless you looked a certain way or had a certain amount of weight, it got worse and worse. What made it even worse were the promoters who were using only those people. The wrestling went right out the window. As the years went on into the later 1980s, it got worse. You saw guys who couldn't even lace their boots getting pushed to the top and in main events. I don't think it has stopped, and I don't think it's going to for a while.

AM: Can you give me a ballpark figure of what percentage of wrestlers are using steroids?

EG: I'd say 75 percent.

AM: Just 75?

EG: It's cut down a dab, because more guys are afraid and probably can't get it.

AM: How have steroids affected your career?

EG: With me saying it, maybe it's different from everybody else. The way I look at it, what happens happens. It's no big deal to me. I do worry about the (steroid users), and I think we all know who they are by looking at the television. Eventually, I hope they realize they are going to get older. I hope they look at Superstar Billy Graham and Lyle Alzado and all those people, and think about their own future.

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I'm not mad or bitter. To be very honest, (steroids) enhances everybody's size, but doesn't make them any taller. Actually, it's height in wrestling that's the biggest deal. You look at guys like Jake Roberts and Ted DiBiase, guys who are not your Lex Luger's, but still have a top spot in the WWF. It's height first with all those guys. Then you look at the way someone's built. Guys like myself who are not as tall would be at a disadvantage anyway even if there were no steroids.

AM: But what about the old days ...

EG: That's just how the evolution of wrestling has gone. Before Vince McMahon Jr., there were big men on top. I'm not talking about steroids. I'm talking about big, tall men. Look at Jack Brisco. He wasn't a big man; just a normal sized guy. Jerry Lawler is not a big guy. But in New York, there were always giants wrestling Bruno (Sammartino) or Pedro (Morales). They didn't have much wrestling ability, but they were big and that's what they were pushed for. Then Superstar Graham came on the scene. He was a big man, but he had muscles. When Vince Jr. took over the thing and went all over the country with the big men and muscle-heads, that just pushed the regular guys out of the way as far as what people thought. He brainwashed the people.

I remember when the WWF started taking over the wrestling scene in regards to what people were watching on TV. I would be in an airport, and, say, a man and his son would come up to me. The man would say, "You know, my son says your a wrestler." I'd say, "Yes, sir." He'd say, "You know, you're not as big as those guys in the WWF." That's how it happened. Everybody started believing that. I know it, because I heard (WCW announcer) Jim Ross talk about it. He'd say, "You know, we ought to get that guy. He may not have that much wrestling ability, but he's a big guy. He's tall." And I would say, "Huh?" They brainwashed him. So think about what they did to the people.

AM: Can I say you never took steroids?

EG: No (Chuckle). I'd rather not talk about it, but I'm different from everybody else.

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AM: Did you use steroids to enhance your career or because you thought you needed them to increase your push?

EG: Yes.

AM: Why?

EG: That was the way everybody was going and looking. And those were the ones the promoters were using.

AM: When was your use from?

EG: From 1986-87.

AM: Why did you get off them?

EG: To be very honest with you -- Missy (Hyatt, Gilbert's ex-wife). She tried to make me realize they were no good for me. And we were trying to start a family.

AM: It was hard to do that with steroid use.

EG: Yes, definitely yes.

AM: Did it help your push in wrestling?

EG: That's when I was probably on top. In 1987, I went to the NWA and worked with Nikita Koloff a lot. I saw myself used in a different way. But then again, after I stopped using them, I hadn't really thought about it. I just work out and eat a lot. I don't know if I got the push, because at that time, I made a different type of name for myself and could be used for my name. Then I went to where I am now -- sitting at home.

AM: When you got off them, did your push diminish? Or was that more because of political reasons?

EG: I think more because of political reasons. I don't even think back on it.

AM: Do you think it was a stupid decision to go on them?

EG: I think it taught me a lesson. It would have been something I would have wondered about the

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whole time if I hadn't. That may sound stupid, but I think we all learn from our mistakes. I never needed them. My dad (Tommy Gilbert) had a lot to do with me getting off them. A couple of months ago, I was home with my parents and the Lyle Alzado thing (an interview with Maria Shriver) came on. He told me, "Son, if you ever do anything, don't ever do them steroids again."

AM: What do you tell guys in the business who are on them?

EG: You can't tell them anything. They won't listen. That's their way of life. They take the pills, work-out and they don't care. They're into the belief that (steroids) is what pushes them to the top. They've been brainwashed. Maybe if heads of offices or bookers are shown people don't want to see that, maybe we'll see a difference. But as long as these guys are people they want to see and are over, they're going to keep doing it.

What did (WCW executive vice president) Jim Herd say? That guys are old enough to determine if they want to use it or not? Is that a person who cares about his employees? It worries me. It really worries me. That should say something about the man right there.

AM: Can wrestling survive without steroids?

EG: Yes. You're going to have to go back to the basics. Say Vince McMahon called all of his guys in, looked away, and sincerely said, "I don't know whose taking them, and I don't care. But in the following weeks, get off them." The same goes for Jim Herd. With all those guys getting off and getting smaller, everybody feels smaller and it's not such a big deal anymore. Maybe it will be wiped out. But I'd say the chances of that are slim and none at this time.

There will be testing for steroids in the WWF. I don't know, but I feel favorites will be kept and there will be reasons sometimes to get rid of people by saying they are on them. I can see that coming early. I couldn't believe they said they were going to test, because everybody there is on them. It looks that way, doesn't it? You watch their TV show, and doesn't everybody look like they're taking something? They look inhuman. I

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I get worried about that, because I hope and pray the test is real. I believe WCW ought to start testing, but they know if they did, half their guys or more would (test positive).

AM: Why doesn't WCW take disciplinary action against guys who violate their other drug policy?

EG: I really believe people like Jim Herd, Jim Ross, (WCW front office worker and building coordinator) Jim Barnett and (WCW president) Jack Petrick -- people in the head office (not Dusty Rhodes, because he's just booking) -- don't have to worry about it. They're not on the stuff. I don't think they care who else does it, as long as they make a buck. That sounds cruel, but I really think that's the way those people feel.

Next issue: A complete report on Halloween Havoc. Also, how WWF storylines have been altered by the biceps injury of Sid Justice, who is expected to miss the next four months. A report on the new Euro-American Wrestling Alliance headed up by Patrick Schaefer, the formal head of the Global Wrestling Federation. Part two of the Eddie Gilbert interview, the letters page and advertisements ... and much more. Welcome to new subscribers! Please keep those subscriptions coming. The next issue will be mailed 10/28. **For those of you with one month subscriptions, please don't forget to resubscribe!**

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